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A CRISIS IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

FREDERIC PALMER

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

The construction and working of ecclesiastical machinery has always been allowed to be the special function of High Churchmen of every description. For there are High Churchmen not only in the Church of England and the Episcopal Church in America, but in every church. The division of churchmen into High, Low, and Broad is founded on the different attitudes of the human mind—legal, emotional, intellectual. All Christians reverence the Church, the Bible, and the conscience. But in presence of a problem one man will ask what is the teaching of the Church? Another will turn to consider what the Bible has to say about it. A third will endeavor to trace it to its basis in the necessities of thought and life. Religion is, for the High Churchman, devotion to an institution; for the Low Churchman, to a person; for the Broad Churchman, to abstract truth. Such sturdy guardians of the different important ways by which the soul approaches God are fortunately found in every church. And so the man who stands pre-eminently for the special tenets of the fathers, whether Calvin, Wesley, Swedenborg, or Channing, is as truly a High Churchman as he whose fathers are Ante- or Post-Nicene. And if the faith is regarded as having been delivered to the saints once and for all, the construction of machinery for its preservation will be not only the duty but the delight of the loyal ecclesiast. The High Churchman therefore has ever been strong in organization, while his Low or Broad Church brother has been intent on other things, and then has been sur-

prised to find that church conventions and ecclesiastical offices have not gone his way.

But movements in the Church of England in the last year or two have indicated that other parties in her are awaking to the importance of organized action. Two books have just appeared which show that the Broad Churchmen and the Evangelicals are each endeavoring to define their position, with a view of attracting adherents and arranging an order of battle.¹ It has been sometimes said that Evangelicalism is dead. According to Rev. Mr. Herklots, it is not only not dead but very much alive, and holding the key to the reconciliation in the future of all sides of the Church of England and of all Christendom. He points to its origin as a child of the Wesleyan Awakening, and to the beneficent results it accomplished—the popularization of hymns and of singing, of Bible-reading, social reforms and the abolition of the slave trade, the utilization of women in the work of the church, home and foreign missions; above all, its interest in spiritual rather than ecclesiastical problems, and its insistence on bringing each individual soul face to face with God. His theological platform he states as follows: “The Holy Scriptures are to us the inspired and authoritative record of Divine revelation. The deity of the Son of God, His miraculous birth, His authoritative teaching, His atoning death, His glorious resurrection and ascension, His second advent in person, and meanwhile His presence with and in His Church universal—these truths are as dear to us as to them [our predecessors]. Like them, we make bold to ‘enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.’ Like them, we teach and preach a living Saviour, a full salvation from sin’s penalty and power, and the need for personal contact with Christ the Lord through simple faith, and that grace

¹ The Future of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England. B. Herklots. Elliot Stock. 1913. Pp. viii, 198. 3s. 6d.

Broad Church. J. E. Symes. Methuen & Co. 1913. Pp. xii, 116.

and faith are alike the gift of God. Like them, we do not for one moment underestimate and undervalue the two great Sacraments of the Gospel.”² This we may take as a statement of the Evangelical platform.

These principles have, in the opinion of the author, been so successful that by the end of the nineteenth century a quarter of the clergy of the Church of England, so he maintains, were of this party. He criticises his party. “Parties, like houses, need spring-cleaning. In process of time all sorts of worn-out, superfluous, antiquated, and undesirable things accumulate within the party walls. An ecclesiastical rummage-sale might be beneficial.”³ He criticises the intellectual poverty of the Evangelical movement, its narrowness not only of outlook but of spirit, its neglect of art and culture and of services enriched by them; especially—its worst feature—“its spirit of suspicion and disunion, the occupation of heresy-hunting.”⁴ To distinguish the kind of ritual which is desirable from that which is undesirable, he gives the following test: “Is it an exhibition to man, or is it an offering to God? Does the nature and amount of the ritual observed obsess the mind, excite the senses, and preoccupy the spirit, so as to positively hinder and obstruct the undistracted worship of the Deity; or does it so act upon the tripartite personality of man as to conduce to deep and heartfelt confession, prayer, and praise? In short, does the ritual dominate the worship, or does the worship dominate the ritual? Is the worship the mere vehicle and occasion for the display of the ritual, or is the ritual the mere handmaid and assistant of the worship? If the former, it is ritualism. If the latter, it is its rival and antithesis.”⁵ This is not a satisfactory test; for no Ritualist would allow that his ritual was a mere exhibition to man, and the worship only its vehicle and occasion. A more logical and satisfactory test

² Page 31.³ Page 38.⁴ Page 43.⁵ Page 94.

would ask whether the ritual was the necessary and readily apprehended expression of doctrines held. Thus there is a clear line between ritual which is expressive of sacramentarian doctrine—a belief in the corporeal presence of deity on the altar or at the font—and that which is aesthetic only. One may like or dislike a vested choir, but there is no sacramentarianism in it. It is almost wholly a matter of taste; or—since all taste has the shadow of a principle behind it—a question of expressing function by dress. On the other hand, one will not be likely to bow before the altar unless he feels a localization of deity there. Mr. Herklots' principle of discrimination does not discriminate. Moreover, one may doubt whether the Evangelical party will accomplish the victory the author glowingly sees before it until, in addition to that enrichment of its services for which he so justly pleads, it modifies its reliance on the letter of Scripture, arising from its limited view of inspiration, and modifies also its legal and substitutional view of the Atonement, and its insistence on conversion as the sole entrance into the kingdom of God.

Mr. Symes' statement of Broad Church doctrine may make some of his friends hesitant about appearing in his company. For attempts to formulate Broad Churchism have too often been in a minimizing direction, endeavoring to allure inquirers by assuring them that there is nothing so very much after all in these dogma-things which theologians have insisted on. To those who find in Broad Churchism a more profound answer to the problems of life than is found elsewhere and a deeper source of comfort, this is not an attraction, and therefore not an advertisement of their benefactor which they are glad to see set forth. Any treatment of the creeds of the ages which does not regard them as precious algebraic formulae of truths which are eternal, they must deprecate. Any intelligent exposition of these formulae, any attempt

to translate them afresh into living terms of the day, they welcome.

Mr. Symes, it is fair to say, is not directly one of these minimizers; yet his book has an apologetic appearance. His dedication has a noble endeavor: "Dedicated to Unbelievers who have the will to believe." But the impression of the succeeding pages is of an attempt to make the Broad Church pill easier to swallow by diminishing its size. There is not the unfolding of the exultant faith of one who has a grasp on profound and wealthy truth. His judicial aim perhaps deliberately confines him to brief and therefore often apparently superficial statement. In regard to relations between members of the Church of England and Nonconformists, for example, he advocates no course, but says: "It is against the purpose of this book, which aims simply at expounding Broad Church views, to take a side when Broad Churchmen differ from one another."⁶ The book gives a brief chapter to each of the main doctrines of the Christian faith and to significant points of religious thought, such as miracles, heathendom, religious education, socialism, as Mr. Symes considers these are held by Broad Churchmen. It is more than a catechism and less than a treatise.

The indignation among Broad Churchmen at the reception given some two years ago by the High Church authorities to Dr. J. M. Thompson's book, *Miracles in the New Testament*, has led to a movement for the abandonment of inactivity and the distinct organization of a Broad Church party. This has given rise to "The Churchmen's Union," which has its members all over England, and has established a monthly magazine—*The Modern Churchman*. Its President is Sir C. Thomas Dyke-Acland; among its Vice-Presidents are Dean Henson of Durham, Canon Rashdall of Hereford, Pro-

fessor Gardner of Oxford, and Professor Henslow; and on its Executive Board are Archdeacon Lilley of Ludlow and Professor Lake of Leyden. Broad Churchmen have hitherto been content with diffusing an atmosphere throughout the community; they are now discovering that they must fight for their lives, and therefore organize.

The fight has been precipitated by an event in Africa. Last June a conference was held at Kikuyu, East Africa, of all the Protestant missionary bodies in the region, for the purpose of establishing among them a working union. The opening service was held in the place of worship of the Kirk of Scotland, and the bishops of Mombasa and Uganda administered the communion to Presbyterians, Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, as well as to members of their own church. At once the bishop of Zanzibar petitioned for the impeachment of his brother bishops who had arranged the meeting and admitted to the communion those who were not members of the Church of England. As a consequence, a controversy has been roused which is now going on throughout the entire English Church. Lord Halifax, president of the Church Union, speaks for the High Churchmen in declaring that the event "threatens a schism which will rend the Church of England in two." The bishop of Oxford, Dr. Gore, says it is impossible to continue in a fellowship which threatens anything so totally subversive of catholic order and doctrine. He doubts if the cohesion of the Church of England were ever more seriously threatened. Another High Churchman asserts that any attempt to establish open communion must result "in far worse than secession. The Church of England and the churches in communion would first be thrown into two violently opposing camps, and then be split from top to bottom and broken into pieces." On the other hand, the bishop of Durham, Dr. Moule,

says that if the bishops of Uganda and Mombasa are arraigned for heresy, he stands beside them; and Dr. Sanday, Professor of Divinity at Oxford, declares, "The Church of England, nay, of Christendom, needs us all. We cannot afford to spend our time in squabbling." The London *Times*, conservative as it is, insists that something must soon be done to "gather up the scattered forces of the Christian cause against a degraded and disintegrated heathenism, and against the resolute and united army of Islam, which will otherwise enter in and possess while we are composing our petty differences of administration. The natural means by which to prevent this is to work for, to lay far-seeing plans for, the ultimate creation of one united native Christian Church in the British East Africa Protectorate. It is the head and front of the two offending bishops that they have realized this."

To us at this distance the turmoil may seem strange, almost incomprehensible. Yet we may remember a similar disturbance, though but a murmur in comparison with this uproar, when, at a service in Trinity Church, Boston, on the tenth anniversary of the death of Phillips Brooks, Dr. Edward Everett Hale received the communion at the hands of Bishop Codman of Maine. With all its comprehensiveness, the Episcopal Church has at times been as narrow as the most rigid close-communication Baptist in insisting on admitting to its communion none but its own members. Yet this unfraternal custom is now held by most liturgical scholars to be owing to a historical blunder. It is based on the rubric at the end of the Confirmation Office in the English and American Prayer Books, which is as follows: "And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed." This at first seems plain; yet this is not a canon, and there is a distinction between rubrics and canons.

The latter are laws passed by the governing body of the church, and are binding upon all its members. But the former are directions for the orderly conduct of the services, and are therefore counsels rather than ordinances. They may be compared to stage-directions, generally to be followed, but by no means prohibitive. This is shown by the recognition in the rubrics themselves of the needs of the occasion. Thus in the second rubric in the Office of Baptism it is provided that for every male child there shall be two god-fathers and one god-mother, "when they can be had." And in the fourth rubric in the Office for the Communion of the Sick it is said, "If a man, either by reason of extremity of sickness, or for want of warning in due time to the Minister, or for lack of company to receive with him, or by any other just impediment, do not receive the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, the Minister shall instruct him, that if he do truly repent him of his sins . . . he doth eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ profitably to his soul's health, although he do not receive the Sacrament with his mouth." To the rubrics in the Prayer Book there is therefore to be added what has been called the rubric of common sense.

But even supposing the rubric of common sense is not called upon in interpreting the rubric of the confirmation service; the historical sense of the latter is violated when it is made to refer to those who are not members of the Episcopal Church. For this is a pre-Reformation rubric, which first appears in the Constitutions of Archbishop Peckham in 1281. There were then no other religious bodies in view than the one Catholic Church; Nonconformists had not come into existence. And that the rubric was not intended to exclude from communion all but Christians of one kind is evident from its practical aim, which is stated in the context. "Many neglect the sacrament of confirmation for want of watchful

advisers; so that there are many, innumerable many, who want the grace of confirmation, though grown old in evil days. To cure this damnable neglect, we ordain that none be admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood that is not confirmed, except at the point of death, unless he have a reasonable impediment."⁷ The confirmation rubric consequently—so most scholars are now agreed—is designed for members of the Episcopal Church, and has nothing to say in regard to members of other churches. It was intended, on the one hand, to prevent the Roman practice of admitting children to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and, on the other, to insure that participation in this sacrament, which was regarded not only as essential to Christianity but also to citizenship and qualification for office, should be preceded by due instruction and preparation. It aimed primarily therefore to secure not exclusion but fitness. But a rigid ecclesiasticism has joined this rubric with a narrow view of the historic episcopate, and brandished them before all comers. Here again the London *Times* gives to the authorities of the English Church a needed warning: "They will look, we venture to trust, even at the historic episcopate itself, and ask whether, not the institution but our conception of it, may not be capable of reconsideration. Amid the fitful glimpses that we have had of its origin it is possible to discern that the episcopate arose as a means towards unity. Ought it ever to have developed into a pretext for perpetual dissidence abroad and at home?"

Even the conservative *Spectator*, the organ of English respectability, utters a similar warning (Jan. 3, 1914):

"Let us however face the worst. Let us suppose that we are wrong, and that Bishop Gore and his followers

⁷ "Statuimus quod nullus ad sacramentum corporis et sanguinis Domini admittatur extra articulum mortis, nisi fuerit confirmatus, vel nisi receptione confirmationis rationabiliter fuerit impeditus." A Collection of the Laws and Canons of the Church of England, by John Johnson, vol. ii, p. 277. (Lib. of Anglo-Cath. Theology.)

will leave the Church, not because they are themselves asked to give Communion to Nonconformists, but because other bishops and clergy who believed it was their right—nay, their duty—to do so, practised such open Communion and mean to continue such acts of religious loving-kindness. We say that even if this deplorable mistake were to occur, no disruption in the true sense would take place. . . . Secession on the grounds foreshadowed by the bishop of Oxford would secure, we will not say no followers, but followers so few in proportion to the total strength of the members of the Establishment as to be unimportant. . . . The vast majority of the English laity, and even of the English laity who hold High Church doctrines and are in strong sympathy with ritualistic practice, are at heart inspired with the true spirit of the Church of England—the spirit of comprehension. . . . They know that if the Church were to be narrowed to an episcopal sect, and were to become a body inspired by Roman exclusiveness and by the doctrine of *nulla salus*, even though it were not in communion with the Roman Church, it could not last a day.”

The Modern Churchman, the Broad Church review (Jan., 1914, p. 517), considers that the almost national discussion of the subject will be of great benefit, and that the existence of it is already a valuable revelation to many who have regarded the Church of England as dominated by the extreme Anglo-Catholics.

It is interesting to note that the leading paper of the Episcopal Church in the United States takes a similar view (*The Churchman*, Jan. 31, 1914):

“In England and in this country there is an important and influential school of earnest and devout Churchmen who think the bishop of Mombasa did wrong. . . . Their objection is based in part upon the familiar rubric at the end of the Order of Confirmation. . . . Does this apply to those who do not conform to the discipline of the

Anglican Churches? There has been in the Church of England and in this country a persistent opinion that this rubric was intended as a disciplinary measure for the children of the Church, to guard them, on the one hand, against premature admission to the Holy Communion, and, on the other hand, to guard the Sacrament against disparagement through the levity of communicants unprepared to receive it. . . . The arguments that support this view of the confirmation rubric are beyond the limits of the present article. They appear to us to be valid. They are corroborated by a traditional practice in all parts of the Anglican Communion. The rubric bears upon children of the Church, for whom alone the Church undertakes to legislate, and not upon those who do not habitually conform to her authority. . . . The Communion at Kikuyu is an impressive spectacle. Men of various denominational connections, all bent on one task—the salvation of the native races through the name of Jesus; all engaged in preaching His gospel; all ready to give their lives in testimony of their faith—some, no doubt, bound to die in the service; all assembled to discuss matters of common concern in the cause of Christ; filled with a holy love for Him and for their fellow-servants; thus they resort to the bishop's altar to receive from him the Sacrament of our Lord's appointment. To us, such an incident indicates that the Holy Spirit is moving His people to compose their divisions and to return to the unity of One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church."

It may be doubted whether this African incident will result, as the High Church prophets gloomily foretell, in the disruption of the Church of England. There are intelligent critics of ecclesiastical affairs who maintain that it would be vastly better if the different parties in the Episcopal Church, and in other churches as well, should frankly recognize their wide differences and

separate. If differences are fundamental, doubtless this is not only necessary but wise. Yet this precludes the beneficial influence of one party upon another, and condemns them to undisturbed isolation and self-content. As long as there is even a nominal bond binding them together, the friction is likely to prove remedial of idiosyncrasies and wholesome; while if the High Churchmen constituted a separate body from the Low Churchmen, neither would affect the other, more than the Methodist now affects the Unitarian. The warring between different divisions in the Roman Catholic Church is quite as great as in Protestantism, though the Roman authorities endeavor to conceal it; but because each is compelled to recognize the others as belonging to its own body, the result has been less divisive than in Protestantism.

Yet even if disruption should not result in England, this incident may bring disestablishment nearer; in which case—so it would seem from a transatlantic point of view—it would prove a great blessing. For the Church of England is so entangled with a special class in society that it has not the chance to have its excellences known to others nor its faults to itself. In order to come to its true self it needs to stand on its own feet. We in America are so accustomed to the separation of Church and State that we can hardly comprehend the gloomy forebodings of English Churchmen at the prospect of disestablishment. We cannot but think that, after the Church's recovery from the shock of that operation, she would experience a new vitality. However that may be, the probability is that this incident will increase for a time the animosities of the different parties, and that the Broad Churchmen and Evangelicals (who object to being called Low Churchmen) will unite against the High Churchmen. As these two African dioceses are independent, it is not probable that any attempt will be made to coerce them

by an official judgment. The custom which the bishops of Mombasa and Uganda have inaugurated will probably be continued in these dioceses and will spread here and there in other missionary jurisdictions. Gradually it may affect the more conservative Church at home, as missionary children have so often done. And then it is possible that the English Church may take a leaf from the practice of the Church of Rome; which has always at first opposed innovations but when she has found she could not fight them, has adopted them, moulded them, and then professed that she had included them all along.

There is rising throughout the world among all Christian bodies a wave of demand for union. By this the High Churchmen of every church understand uniformity. Taking Jerome's mistranslation, which Rome enforced, they insist that there must be one fold as well as one shepherd. Union to them therefore means, "Forsake your ways, all you others, and come and join us." Rome has extended this invitation for several centuries, and it has had little success except when supplemented by a conviction of the intrinsic worth of her position. But there are many who reject uniformity who are working for what is called organic unity: by which is meant some institutional connection, more or less close, among the different Christian bodies, in government, creed, or worship. The nature of this connection is not yet clearly seen by those who are reaching towards it. Whether it is feasible, and if so, under what conditions, is still a problem. But it is becoming every day plainer that, whatever may be the case with uniformity and unity, we have already more union on hand than we have ecclesiastical room for. Young Men's Christian Associations and Students' Volunteer Movements, summer Union churches, undenominational Divinity Schools, and Organized Charities have brought together Christians of all names, not only in common work but in common wor-

ship, and made it difficult for them to shore up their denominational walls. This drawing together means that all are feeling the presence of one and the same spirit. Since spirit shapes body to its own ends, we may perhaps look to the establishment ultimately of some form of organic unity. But it will come not by ecclesiastical conventions imposing ways upon the indwelling spirit, but by the spirit dictating ways to the conventions. It will be with the various ecclesiastical machineries as it was in Ezekiel's vision. "Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went. When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them; for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels." The incident in Africa was a result of the greater apprehension of the spirit of Christ, and it will do much to extend the understanding and apprehension of that spirit.⁸

⁸ Since this article was written the archbishop of Canterbury has called a Council to meet in July to give advice in the Kikuyu case.